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U.S. Department of Justice

National Institute of Justice

Washington, D.C. 20531

September, 1981

Dear Colleague:

One of the programs of the National Institute of Justice is concerned with providing support for research that could significantly increase our ability to study crime and delinquency in our society and to evaluate the programs and processes of the criminal justice system. Under this program we award each year a relatively small number of grants for research in applied methodology and for the development of improved techniques of measurement, design and analysis.

Although we feel that this program has been and will continue to be successful in supporting research on innovative and useful techniques, we are making a special effort this year to generate more research on the important topics of classification and prediction. We believe that this area has considerable potential for interesting, careful study and scientific advance.

Sincerely,

Harry M. Bratt
Acting Director

CLASSIFICATION, PREDICTION, METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The identification of theoretically and operationally significant classes of offenders and offense behavior patterns has fundamental importance in the study of crime and its control. If the systematic evolution of a scientific understanding of criminal behavior is thought to be possible, the argument seems persuasive that some kind of non-tautological, empirically meaningful organizing principles are necessary to make intelligible the diversity of phenomena included in the general idea of criminality or the observed variability in the progress of criminal careers.

The issue is, perhaps, of even more immediate importance in the criminal justice system's handling of offenders. At least in part, the choice among dispositional options at a series of decision points is determined by a presumption of predictability: what is thought to be true regarding the future behavior of some more or less formally defined class of offenders (future patterns of criminality, dangerousness to society, differential responsiveness to various treatment modalities, problems in adjustment to prison or to release from prison, etc.) is likely to be true about the individual who has what the decision maker regards as the essential attributes of a given class.

The National Institute has a priority interest in research generally aimed at improving the technical quality and utility of classification/prediction schemes. Broadly speaking, this program is intended to provide support for studies concerned with our ability to classify objectively and unambiguously, to interpret with clarity the theoretical and operational significance of classification results and to understand with greater accuracy and precision the statistical properties inherent in classification-based attempts at prediction of future behaviors. There exists a very substantial literature on the many research issues of concern here. Still particularly noteworthy are the thoughtful, brief discussions of Hood and Sparks in "Key Issues in Criminology"[1] and of Gibbons in his article "Offender Typologies -- Two Decades Later."[2] A quite thorough treatment of the subject emphasizing problems in numerical taxonomy is contained in Brennan et. al.'s final report: "Multivariate Taxonomic Classification for Criminal Justice Research."[3] Finally, Monahan's recent and very readable monograph[4] examines in great depth the problem of predictions of violence in individuals.

In addition to the classification/prediction problems, the National Institute also has an interest in sponsoring research generally aimed at improving the precision and accuracy of measures in crime and criminal justice studies, promoting economy and efficiency in study designs, and enhancing the significance and cogency of study conclusions. Researchers are therefore invited to submit proposals for projects intended to develop advances in techniques of measurement and inference or to test other methodological innovations applicable to criminal justice research and evaluation studies.

Proposal authors should keep in mind that the primary objective of projects funded under this part of the program must be to increase our capacity to study crime and criminal justice operations. All proposals must, therefore, specify clearly the methodological problem being addressed and the way in which the authors see the project providing an advance in the current state-of-the-art of criminal justice research and evaluation. Authors are strongly encouraged to include as an integral part of their project a specific, criminal justice application. Frequently this can be accomplished through re-analysis of some existing data bases that are available to the researcher. In any case, the inclusion of an applied "test" within the project design is of great help to proposal reviewers in understanding the criminal justice significance the authors see in their work. Furthermore, should the research be successful, the demonstration of its potential utility to the criminal justice research and evaluation community is immeasurably enhanced if the publication of results includes some such concrete application.

II. REVIEW PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Interested researchers should submit proposals in accordance with the instructions contained in Section III of this announcement. Proposals received will be reviewed by a joint panel of National Institute of Justice staff and researchers from outside the Institute who are chosen for the significance of their work in the various fields that are represented in the proposals received.

The main points to be considered in the course of this review are:

1. Is the objective of the proposed research appropriate for this program? How significant to criminological theory or criminal justice research and evaluation are the issues being investigated?

2. Is the project's design technically sound?

3. If successful, to what extent would the research constitute a genuine advance in technical capabilities and practises current in criminology or in criminal justice research and evaluation?

The result of the panel's deliberations will be the selection and recommendation of those proposals that would in its view constitute the most worthwhile program that could be supported with funds available in this fiscal year. Authority to make grant awards is, of course, reserved to the Director of the National Institute of Justice.

FY'82 program budget allocations have not yet been established; however, support for this program has been tentatively set at a level between $500 thousand and $1 million.

III. HOW TO APPLY

Eight copies of fully executed proposals should be sent to:

Classification, Prediction, Methodology
Program
Office of Research and Evaluation Methods
National Institute of Justice
633 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20531

A proposal consists of the following:

1. A completed and signed Federal Assistance application on Standard Form 424 and OJARS 4000/1.

2. A budget narrative.

3. A program narrative.

The program narrative is the technical description of the work to be undertaken. It is primarily on the basis of the information presented in this part of the proposal that the review panel arrives at its funding recommendations. Applicants should be careful to ensure that this section contains clear statements of a) the nature of the research problem to be addressed; b) the theoretical or operational context in which the problem arises in criminology or criminal justice studies; c) the methodology of the proposed research project and the general plan for the conduct of the work; and 4) the kinds of products anticipated as resulting directly from the research (books, journal articles, monographs, computer software, etc.)

As attachment to the program narrative, applicants are required to furnish a project abstract of not more than 200 words, a short (1 page) schedule of the planned sequence of project activities, and a brief statement of the grantee organization's relevant qualifications plus professional resumes of key project personnel.

IV. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION SCHEDULE

Two proposal review and funding cycles are planned in fiscal 1982. In order to be eligible for funding under the first cycle, the eight copies of the program narrative section of the proposal must be

postmarked no later than December 18, 1981. Although we would encourage submission of complete proposal by that date, applicants will be given until January 15, 1982 to send in the required eight copies of SF 424, OJARS Form 4000/1 and the budget narrative.

For consideration in the program's second review cycle, the eight copies of the program narrative section must be postmarked no later than April 30, 1982, with copies of the SF 424, OJARS 4000/1 and budget narrative mailed by May 28, 1982.

V. FURTHER INFORMATION

In order to obtain copies of the required application forms or to get further information about the program or the application process, researchers should write to Richard S. Laymon, Program Manager, Classification, Prediction, Methodology Development Program, at the address in Section III above. Dr. Laymon can be reached by phone at (202) 724-8265.

Applicants who have a research idea but are uncertain of its appropriateness for funding under this program are strongly encouraged to call Dr. Laymon and discuss the project with him before undertaking the considerable amount of effort required to plan their project in detail and write up a proposal that would be competitive.

VI. GRANTS PREVIOUSLY AWARDED UNDER THE METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Multivariate Taxonomic Techniques in Criminal Justice Research, Behavioral Research Institute, Boulder, Colorado, Principal Investigator, Timothy Brennan.

Conventional and Frontier Analyses of Cost Functions Characterizing Correctional Institutions, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Principal Investigator, Anne Witte.

Specifications and Test of "Population at Risk" Crime Rates Statistics, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, Principal Investigator, Keith Harries.

Robust Estimation in Latent Trait Analysis, BSSR, Washington, D.C., Principal Investigator, Howard Wainer.

Ecological Approach to Environmental Evaluation of Residential Treatment Homes, Environmental Research and Development Foundation, Phoenix Arizona, Principal Investigator, Rajendra Srivastava.

Sources of Error in Criminal Justice Survey Data, University of California at Santa Barbara, Principal Investigators, Richard Berk and William Bielby.

The Analysis of Interorganizational Networks in the Delivery of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Services, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, Principal Investigators, Jon Miller and James Lincoln.

Blockmodel Techniques for Criminal Justice Research, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Principal Investigator, Phipps Arabie.

The Development of Criminal Incidence and Prevalence Models, ANALOGS, Washington,D.C., Principal Investigator, Stephen Stollmack.

Comparative Validation of the Randomized Response and Direct Question Methods, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Principal Investigator, Marvin Wolfgang.

Bayes Estimates in Stochastic Models of Crime Commission Rates, The Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California, Principal Investigators, Jan Chaiken and John Rolph.

Detecting Patterns in Criminal Behavior, University of Southern California, Principal Investigator, Norman Cliff.

Developing Improved Techniques for Evaluating Correctional Programs, University of Illinois/Chicago Circle, Principal Investigator, Michael Maltz.

Inferring Individual Behavior From Grouped Data, University of Illinois/ Chicago Circle, Principal Investigator, John Wanat.

Examining Patterns in Crime Data, University of California at Santa Barbara, Principal Investigators, Reginald Golledge and Lawrence Hubert.

Fear of Crime, Westinghouse National Issues Center, Arlington, Virginia, Principal Investigator, Terry Baumer.

Increasing the Statistical Power of Empirically Derived Taxonomies in Criminal Justice Research, Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, Boys Town, Nebraska, Principal Investigator, Craig Edelbrock.

Measurement Issues in the Evaluation of the Effects of Juvenile Justice Programs, Claremont Graduate School, Los Angeles, California, Principal Investigator, Mark Lipsey.

Toward a Routinization of Citizen Feedback on Criminal Justice System Performance, University of CA-Santa Barbara, Principal Investigator, Richard Berk.

The Validity of Arrest Rates for Cross-Sectional Analysis, Police Foundation, Washington, D.C., Principal Investigator, Barry Glick.

Toward Methods for Improved Analysis of Criminal Justice Data Using Non-Equivalent Control Groups, California Youth Authority, Sacramento, California, Principal Investigator, Rudy A. Haapanen.

Adaptive Evaluation Designs for Criminal Justice Programs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Principal Investigator, Richard Larson.

Evaluation and Demonstration of Numerical Assignment Techniques for Criminal Justice Classification, Behavioral Research Institute, Boulder, Colorado, Principal Investigator, Tim Brennan.

A Method for Selecting Analytic Procedures to Examine Crime Patterns, University of CA-Santa Barbara, Principal Investigators, Lawrence Hubert and Reginald Golledge.

Estimating Victim Vulnerability, Bureau of Social Science Research, Washington, D.C., Principal Investigator, Howard Wainer.

A New Methodology for Objective Measurement in Criminal Justice, The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, Principal Investigator, Benjamin Wright.

Community Agencies and Client Outcomes in the Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders Program, Indiana University Foundation, Bloomington, Indiana, Principal Investigator, Jon Miller.

Methodological Issues in the Longitudinal Study of Law Violating Behavior, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, Principal Investigator, Kenneth Polk.

Models for Estimating the Incidence, Prevalence and Duration of Criminality in Society, ANALOGS, Inc., Washington, D.C., Principal Investigator, Mike Greene.

Evaluation and Demonstration of Numerical Assignment Techniques for Criminal Justice Classification, Human Systems Institute, Inc., Boulder, Colorado, Principal Investigator, Timothy Brennan.

Development of Methods for Assessing Strength & Integrity of Interventions in Criminal Justice Programs, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, Principal Investigator, Stephen G. West.

Developing Causal Models with Discrete Variables and Selective Samples for Criminology, University of California-Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, Principal Investigator, Peter Bentler.

Stochastic Models for Multiregion Impact Evaluation, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, Principal Investigator, Stuart Jay Deutsch.

References

1. Hood, R. and R. Sparks, Key Issues In Criminology, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York (1970).

2. Gibbons, D. C., "Offender Typologies -- Two Decades Later," British Journal of Criminology 15(2), 140-156 (1975).

3. Brennan, T., Multivariate Taxonomic Classification for Criminal Justice Research:

Volume I. "An Evaluative Overview of Classification in Criminal Justice." (Includes a quite extensive bibliography of publications on classification in criminology.)

Volume II. "Evaluating Statistical Classification Methods (Monte Carlo Studies.)"

Volume III. "Application of Numerical Classification Methods in Criminology and General Conclusions."

(Xerox copies of individual volumes of this report are available at a cost of $5.00 per volume from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service. An order form is included on the last page of this announcement.)

4. Monahan, J., The Clinical Prediction of Violent Behavior, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Rockville, MD. (Copies of this monograph can be obtained from the Government Printing Office at a cost of $5.00 each. Prepaid orders citing GPO Stock no. 017-024-01049-9 should be sent to:

Superintendent of Documents
Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402.

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